

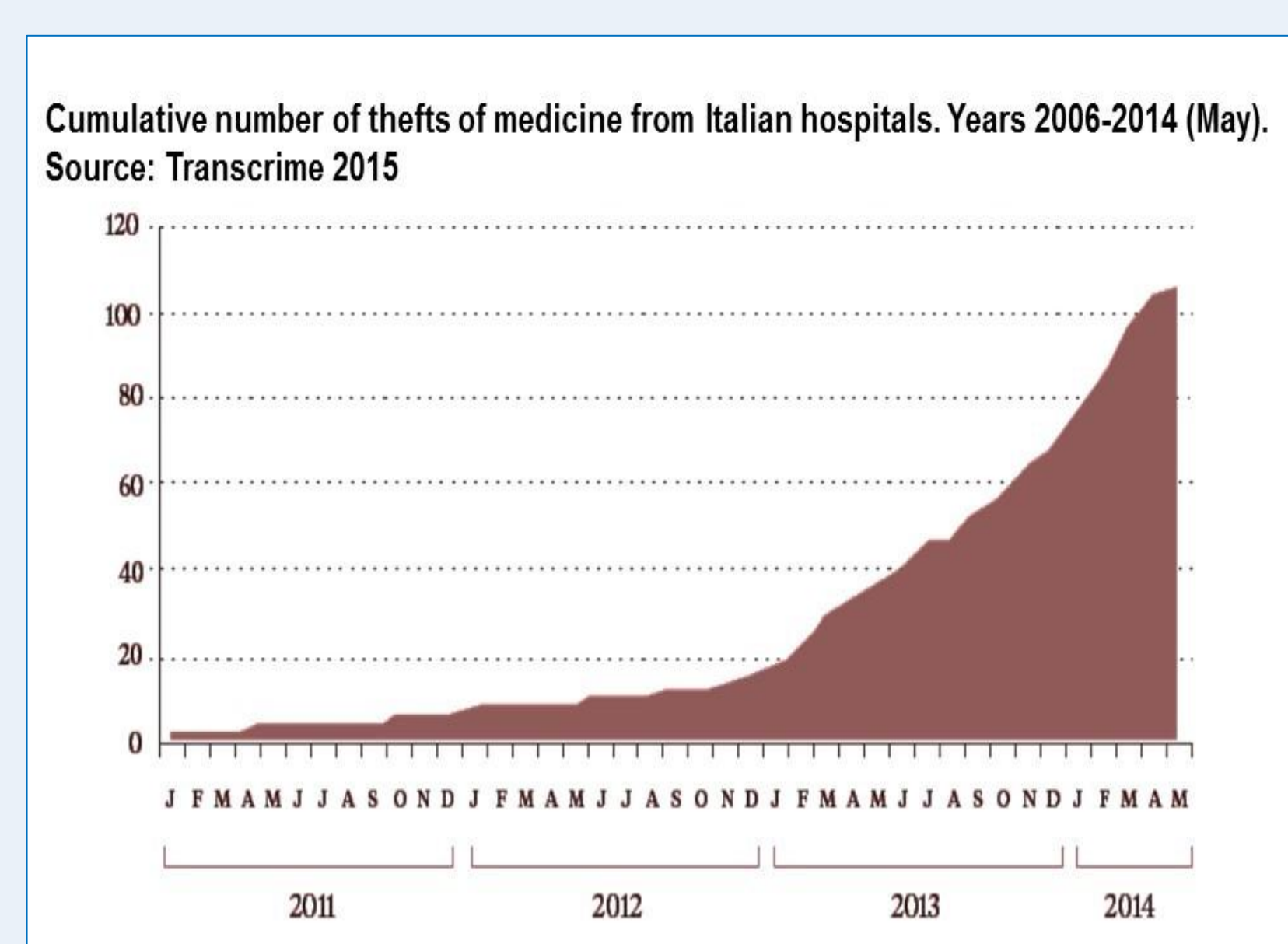
Thefts of medicines from Hospital Pharmacies: an European challenge

M. Pani¹, S. Cannizzo², A. Antonel³, E. Rossi³, G. Turchetti²

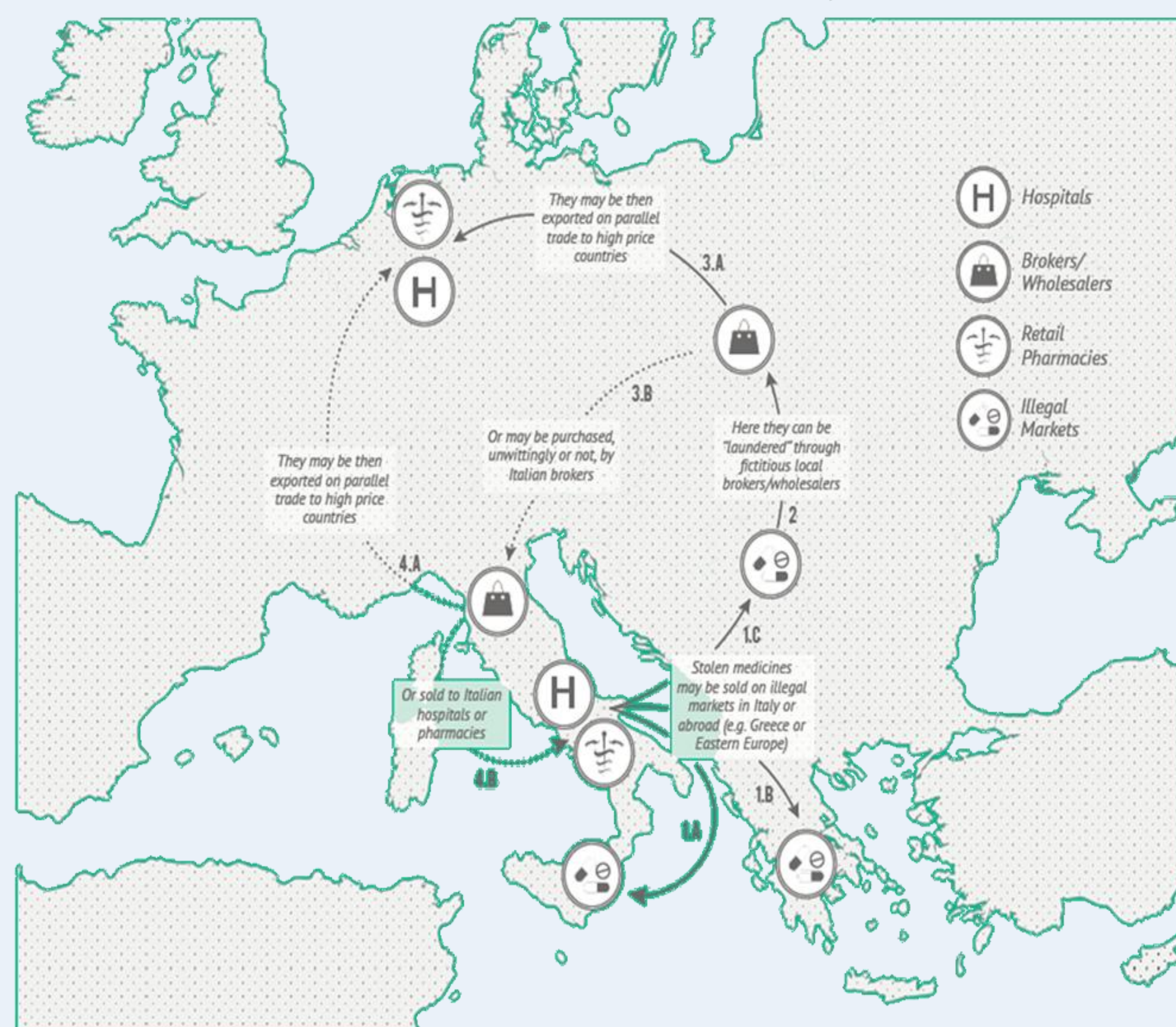
¹SIFO ²Institute of Management, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa, Italy ³LogPlus Srl

BACKGROUND

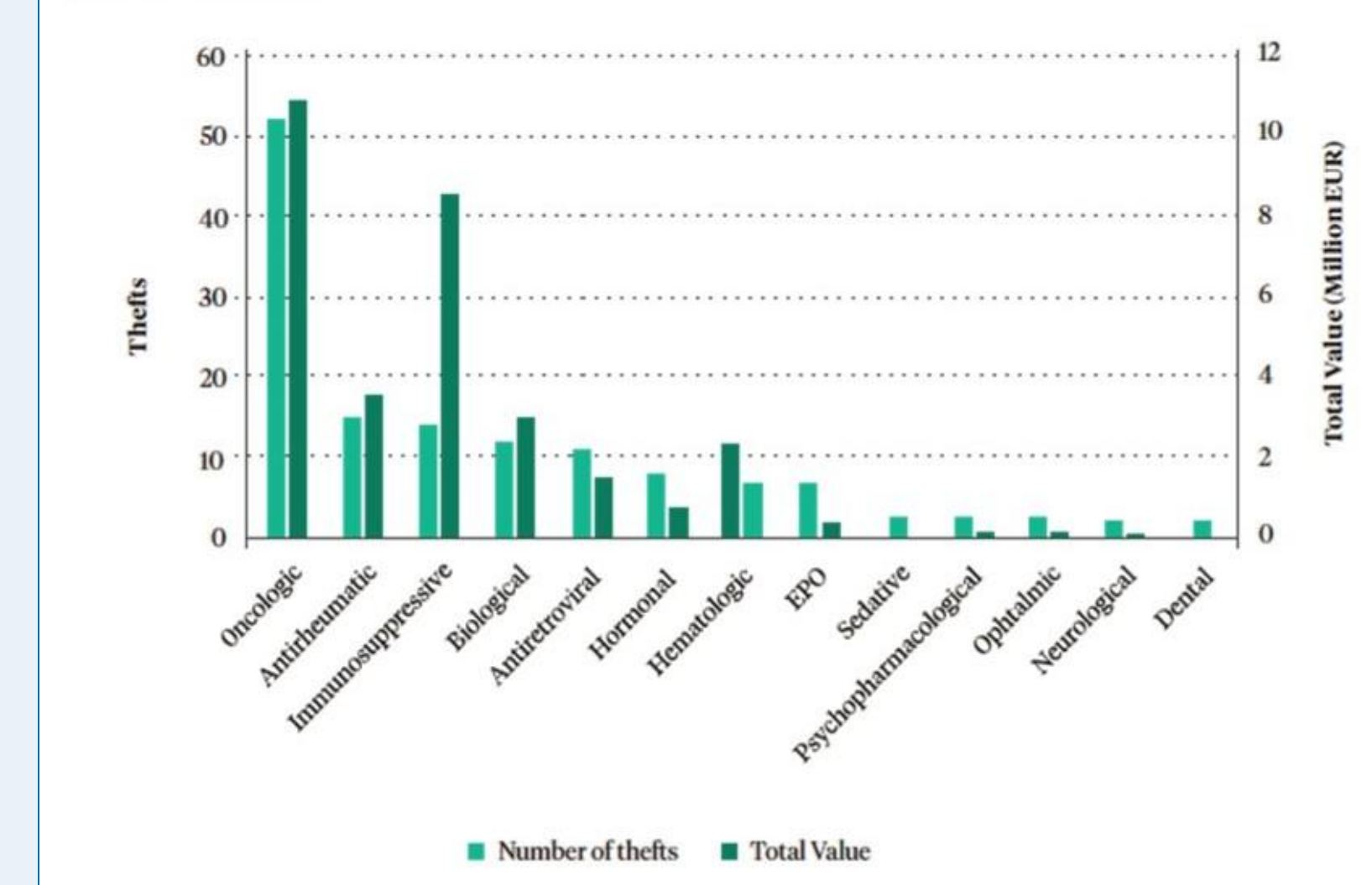
Fake medicines, causing health damages to patients, economic losses to National Health Systems, and economic and reputational damages to pharmaceutical companies, represent at least 6% and 10% of global and European pharmaceutical market, respectively. In Italy from 2006 to 2014 (May), one hospital in ten was victim of theft of medicines with an economic loss between 250,000 and 330,000 of euro per event.



Possible destinations of stolen medicines. Source: Transcrime, 2015



The number of thefts and total value stolen by type of medicines in Italy. Source: Transcrime 2015



In the last three years, thefts increased exponentially (+1,175%) causing a direct total loss of 18,704,000 euro. High price medicines are the most stolen from Italian hospital pharmacies by organized criminal groups both Italian and foreign. The more complex hospitals experienced the greater number of thefts: bigger hospitals (more than 20 specialties) recorded about the 42.3% of total thefts.

OBJECTIVE

Increasing the awareness of drug theft phenomenon in hospital top management, developing a new model for the effective management of safety dimension of hospital pharmacies (HPs), diffusing the culture of prevention, safety and risk management. Specific objectives: developing specific "guidelines" for assessing and increasing the safety level of HPs in Italy.

RESULTS

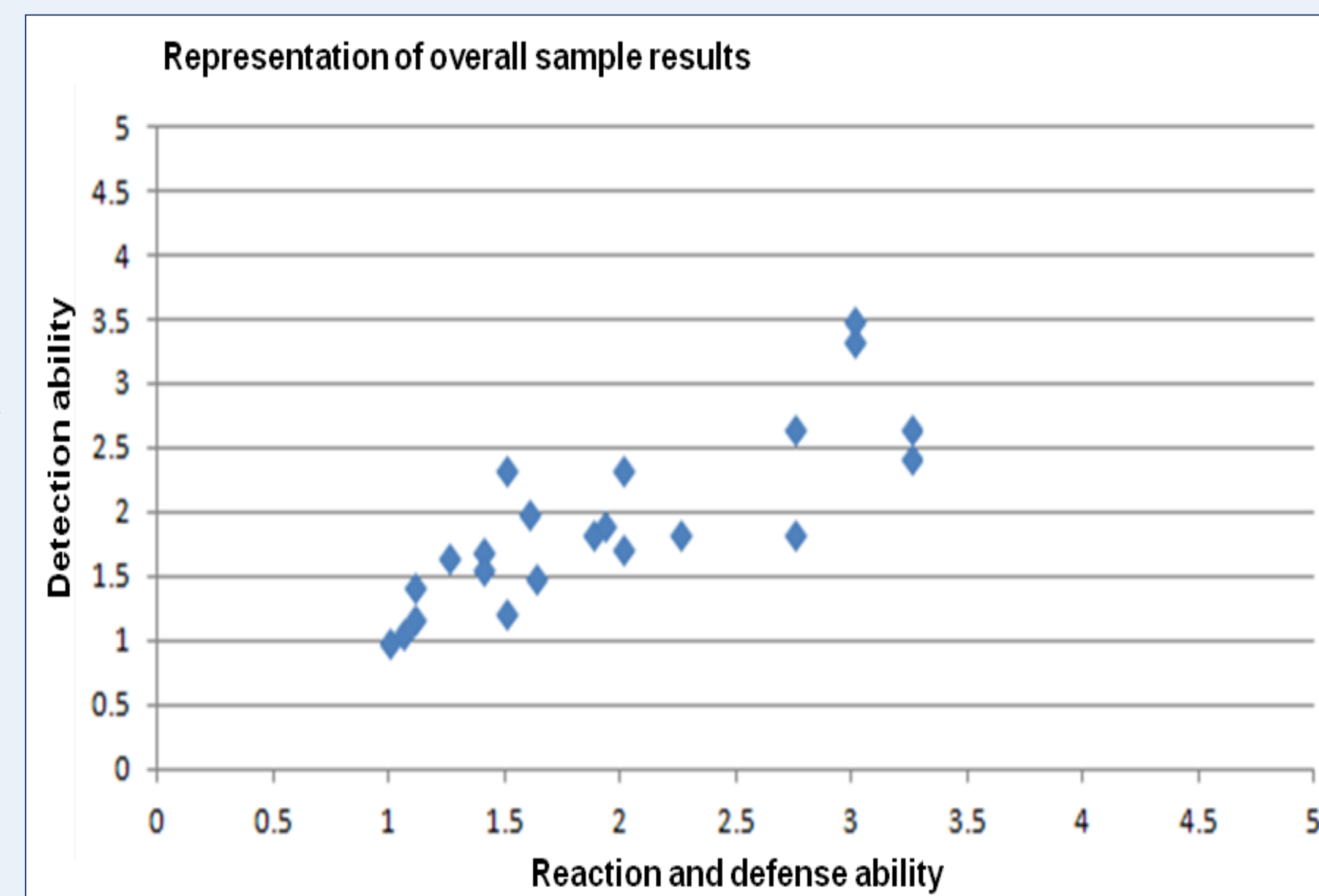
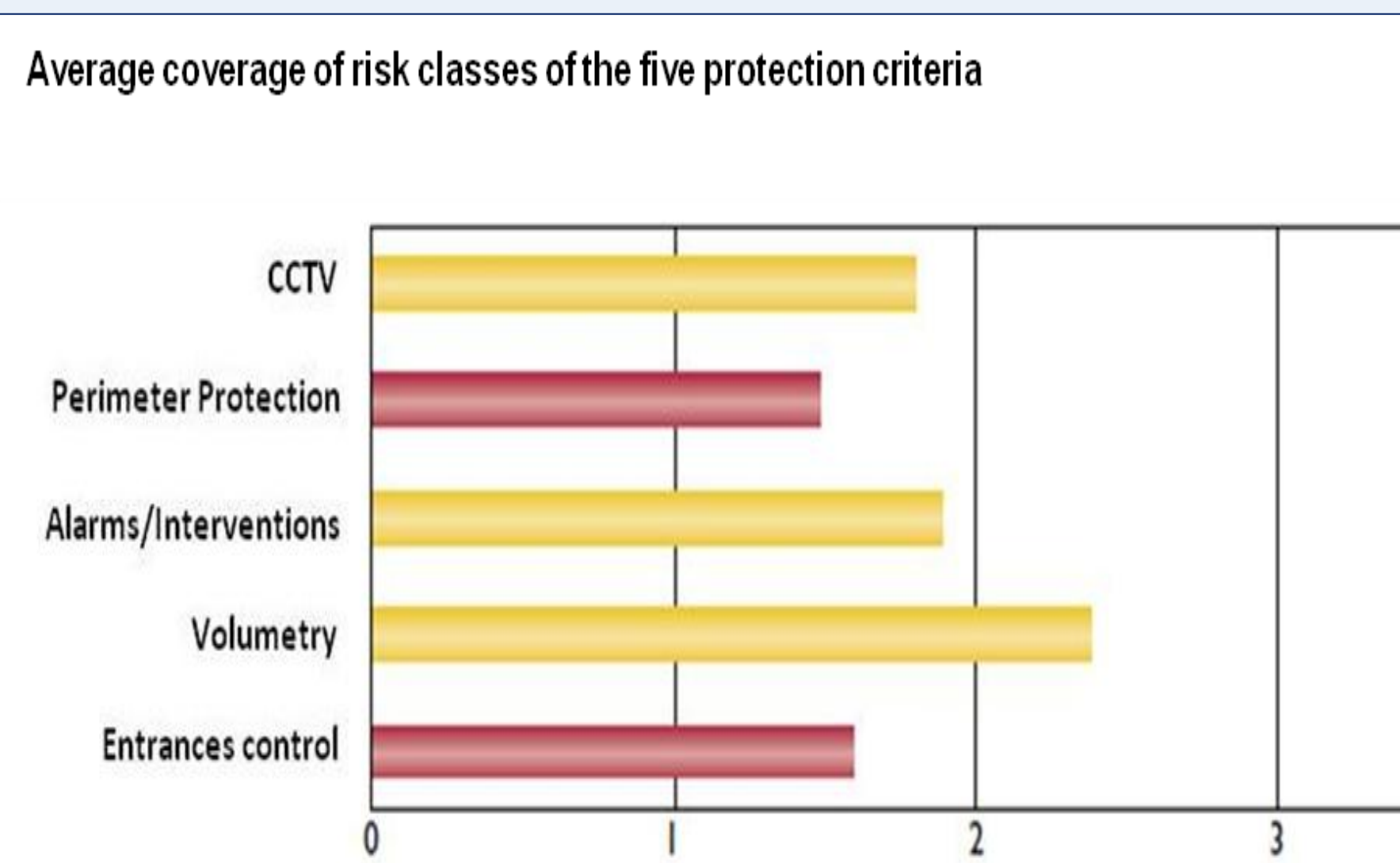
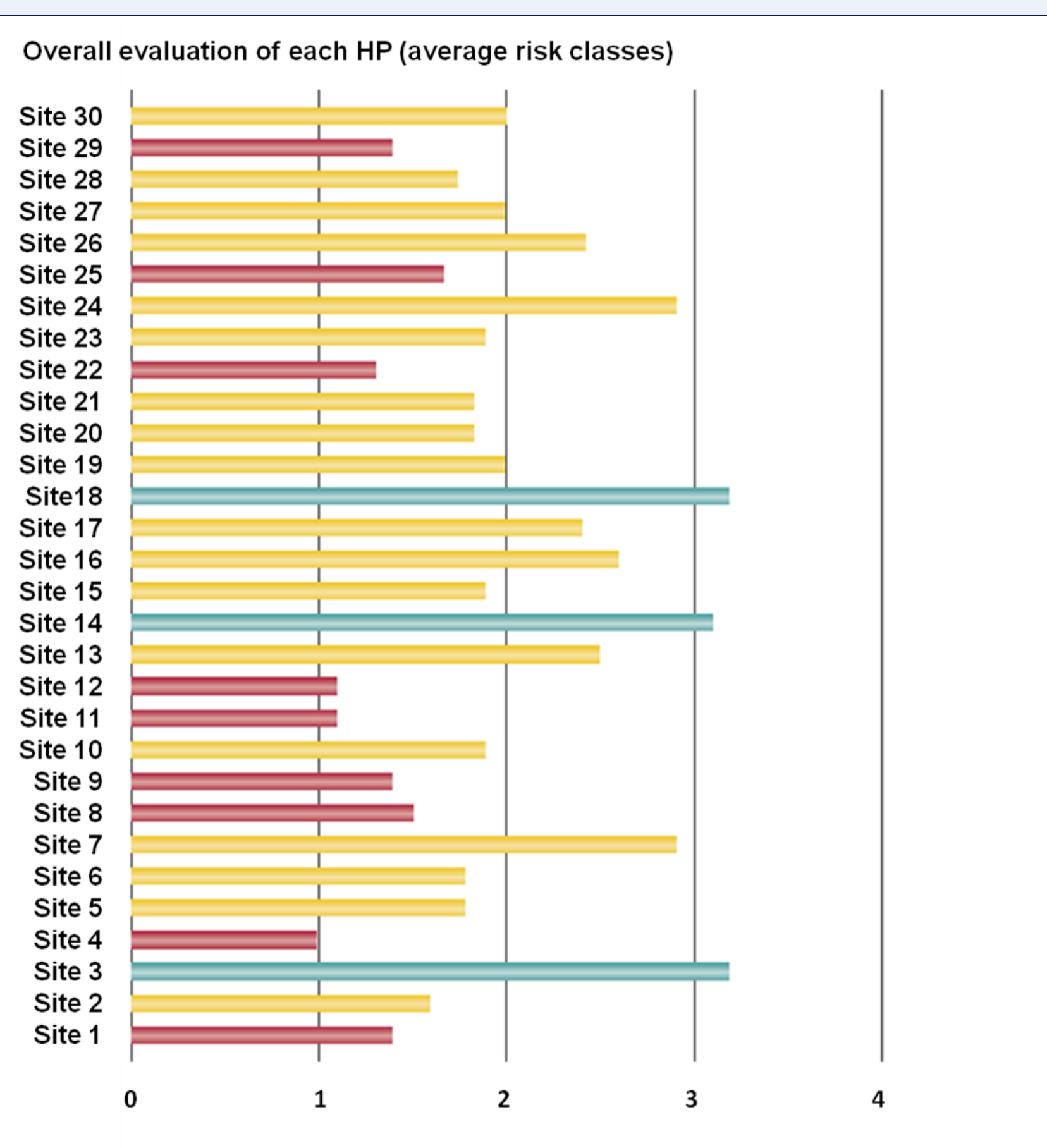
Both lack of planning for security risk-assessment and poor application of protective systems were observed. Only 10% of the sample satisfied the first three security criteria and had a sufficient security risk level; 66% of the sample was inadequate (few criteria partially satisfied); 24% of the sample was seriously insufficient (both basic passive and active protection systems were missing). Based on this risk assessment activity, guidelines have been produced containing examples of best practices and guiding principles for effectively assessing the security risk level of HPs. Beneficiaries are hospital decision makers and managers, HP managers and HP personnel.

METHODS

During 2014-2015, a sample of 30 HPs has been visited and their level of safety assessed. The selected HPs belong to different Italian geographical regions and have various dimensions: small (HPs in hospitals with < 500 beds), medium (500-1000 beds), large (over 1000 beds or centralised warehouses). A security risk score has been assigned to each HP, synthesizing the overall coverage degree based on the combined assessment of five protection criteria: i) entrances control; ii) volumetric protection detectors; iii) passive perimeter protection systems for windows/walls, active protection systems; iv) alarm transmission devices; v) video recording systems.



Matrix of Risk Classes of Padlock Project	
CLASS 1: SERIOUSLY INADEQUATE	Lack of basic passive and active safety systems. Failure of security criteria. It requires an overall design of safety systems and major adjustment actions.
CLASS 2: INADEQUATE	Partial fulfillment of some criteria. Although some safety characteristics are present, the gaps need to be filled to ensure minimum levels of security for medicines.
CLASS 3: SUFFICIENT	Minimum acceptable level of safety. Meet the first 3 safety criteria (in order of importance), but it still presents a risk level to manage in order to protect the drugs effectively.
CLASS 4: GOOD	First four security criteria are met. Although improvements are possible, it represents a good level of safety for the management and storage of the drugs. It should be recommended to integrate with missing systems (CCTV).
CLASS 5: VERY GOOD	All safety criteria are met.



CONCLUSIONS

The paper presents data of the first national study that assesses (through accurate on-site visits) the security of HPs in Italy, and proposes a tool – specific guidelines - for assessing and increasing the safety level of HPs. Main limitation of the study may be the relatively small number of analysed HPs. The study confirms the high vulnerability of HPs and the urgency of a strong action for promoting the diffusion of the risk management culture in Italy.

REFERENCES

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CONTACTS

Prof. Giuseppe Turchetti, PhD, Fulbright Scholar: g.turchetti@sss.up.it
Institute of Management, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa, Italy